

Deer Management Plan Stakeholder Meeting #4  
December 8, 2016; 10:00am – 5:00 pm  
RedRossa Convention Center, Pierre

**Attendance:**

**Stakeholders:** Boyd Schulz, Josh Kettig, Andy Wookey, Jason West, Dave Eichstadt, Mike McKnight, Brenda Foreman, Jodie Anderson, Cody Hodson, Dan Svingen, Bob Waterbury, Rebecca Newton, Kerry Burns, Ron Skates, Chris Hesla, Scott Phillips, Andy Vandel, Mark DeVries, Dale Johnson, Jim Scull, CC Steen

**GFP:** Tom Kirschenmann, Mark Norton, Cindy Longmire, John Kanta, Chad Switzer, Josh Delger, Paul Coughlin, Tim Olson, Nathan Baker, Keith Fisk, Andy Lindbloom, Mike Kintigh, Mark Ohm, Steve Griffin, Kevin Robling, Jacquie Ermer

Tom Kirschenmann, GFP Deputy Director: Welcome, review today's objectives/topics, next meeting around March 2017 to discuss draft plan.

**Population Modeling-** presentation by Kevin Robling, GFP Big Game Biologist

- Reviewed Integrated Population Model used by GFP, data inputs and needs.
- Modeling assists with proactive management.

QUESTION: Where are radio-collared deer distributed throughout state?

ANSWER: We do not have equal distribution across state, Black Hills, Southwest, Southeast, Northeast, and along Missouri River; will be adding more radio-collared deer this winter in southeastern portion of state.

QUESTION: How does GFP account for radio collar failure?

ANSWER: If lose signal then radio collar is censored from analysis.

QUESTION: How does GFP account for hunter's selecting radio collared deer?

ANSWER: Assume equal, we know some hunters target and others do not.

QUESTION: Jackson County- does GFP know where deer are collared?

ANSWER: Yes, Jackson County is part of Data Analysis Unit 4 which includes prairie portions of Pennington and Custer counties as well; all deer representative within data analysis unit.

QUESTION: How does GFP make management decisions for units that don't have collared deer?

ANSWER: Started collaring just 1-2 years ago, we have to extrapolate findings to units where we don't currently have survival data; plan is to radio collar more and more in future; deer population being managed towards the population objective of increase, decrease, or maintain.

QUESTION: How can we manage mule deer and white-tailed deer with an "any" deer tag?

ANSWER: Look at past harvest statistics and percent of each harvested with “any” tag- use this in model.

QUESTION: Is feasibility of not having more collared deer a manpower issue or money issue?

ANSWER: Yes, limited by both staff and financial constraints.

QUESTION: How long does GFP monitor radio collared deer?

ANSWER: Five years in a data analysis unit (DAU); battery life good about 5 years.

QUESTION: How many radio collars/deer disappear or can’t find?

ANSWER: Less than 10%.

QUESTION: How does GFP know how many mule deer are harvested with “any” deer tag? How do we know what hunters are going to do?

ANSWER: Actually been consistent on how many mule deer are harvested with an any deer tag; not a lot of variation over time; we have good idea of how many adult does, bucks, white-tailed, mule deer harvested on any deer tag; we have statistics for every tag type.

QUESTION: If have double tags in a unit, does this mean deer population is high?

ANSWER: Could mean population doing well, but also could be used to keep hunter density reasonable.

QUESTION: How does GFP get pregnancy rates?

ANSWER: Ultrasound of captured does and fetus counts from investigating road-killed does (Feb-Apr).

QUESTION: Are there any issues with collars for bucks?

ANSWER: We’ve tried 2 different modified collars with some success but this year we are only using ear tag transmitters and no radio collars on bucks. Neck expansion during rut is the concern.

QUESTION: What info does GFP get from radio collared deer?

ANSWER: Strictly survival data- dead or alive; not collecting home range or movement data.

QUESTION: Does GFP know which deer is which?

ANSWER: Yes, each radio collar on a deer has a unique frequency.

QUESTION: Do GFP staff ever talk to landowners on what they think deer population is?

ANSWER: Yes, surveys, GFP personnel (Wildlife Conservation Officers, Wildlife Damage Specialists, etc.) visits, open houses, Landowners Matter Newsletter

Suggestion: invite wildlife conservation officer to conservation club meetings or to meet with several landowners; suggestion to spread the word to others to please fill out hunter survey cards.

QUESTION: What time of year is fawn survey conducted?

ANSWER: Sept- Oct during herd composition survey.

**Deer Disease Management-** presentation by Steve Griffin, GFP Big Game Biologist

-Chronic Wasting Disease (CWD): Main concern--unknown population effects.

-Epizootic Hemorrhagic Disease (EHD): Main concern--can have large die-offs.

QUESTION: How long does it take to show symptoms/signs of CWD?

ANSWER: Could range from six months to years.

QUESTION: Can predators (coyotes) get CWD?

ANSWER: No, but they can potentially transfer prion to new areas.

QUESTION: Can cattle get it from deer?

ANSWER: No.

QUESTION: What is GFP doing to manage disease?

ANSWER: Currently no vaccines available for CWD or EHD, no wildlife management tools or strategies to eradicate; GFP continues to conduct surveillance and testing of "sick" deer.

QUESTION: How long has CWD been around?

ANSWER: First identified 40+ years ago in Colorado.

QUESTION: Did GFP put limitations on captive game farms because of CWD?

ANSWER: No, captive industry is all controlled and permitted by Animal Industry Board; state vet looks at issues/concerns and issues health certificates for captive animals.

QUESTION: How does GFP estimate how many deer are actually dead based on reports?

ANSWER: We don't use a multiplier; just track the "reported" dead deer; this is just minimum.

QUESTION: In years when there are not many EHD reports, is it still enzootic? When does it become epizootic?

ANSWER: Yes we assume there is some level of EHD every year; some years we have the right environmental conditions and it becomes epizootic (more widespread).

QUESTION: Where does EHD virus itself come from? Does vector (midge) get it from deer or where does vector actually get it from?

ANSWER: Virus has to overwinter somewhere... we don't know if that's through deer, cattle etc., then the biting fly transfers virus by biting other animals; it's not spread deer to deer through direct contact.

QUESTION: Is EHD an "overpopulation" disease?

ANSWER: Not necessarily, but biting flies may have more deer to bite if more deer are in particular area. EHD can occur in areas of low deer populations as well.

QUESTION: What are specific environmental conditions for EHD?

ANSWER: Drought year has more potential for outbreak; flies breed and hatch better when more mudflats are available from receded water sources.

QUESTION: Are mature bucks more susceptible to EHD?

ANSWER: EHD affects all ages; there just seems to be more reports of the mature bucks; fawns can carry some maternal resistance.

QUESTION: How long has EHD been around?

ANSWER: At least since the 1950s; prior biologists and labs weren't able to diagnose it but likely around for a century.

GFP: Administrative rule allows GFP to remove licenses only after 2<sup>nd</sup> draw for limited licenses. Should we make changes to this to be able to remove after 1<sup>st</sup> draw? Timing of disease outbreak plays role too. First hard frost kills/stops the EHD virus.

Tom Kirschenmann asked the group: What are concerns if we removed licenses after 1<sup>st</sup> draw?

QUESTION: If GFP did remove earlier, could GFP issue more licenses later if outbreak not as bad?

ANSWER: Not easily and unlikely.

QUESTION: Are there concerns about too much pressure on deer with all the disease, habitat loss, vehicle collisions, hunter pressure and harvest, etc.?

ANSWER: We monitor survival/mortality through radio collaring; harvest is the only thing we can control by license allocations; all types mortality taken into account each year.

QUESTION: Is the voluntary option to return license more biological or social?

ANSWER: Both.

**Habitat and Public Hunting Access-** presentations by GFP staff Mark Norton, Senior Wildlife Biologist; Paul Coughlin, Habitat Program Administrator; and Tim Olson, Senior Wildlife Biologist.

-Habitat loss (grassland, wetland, woody cover), GFP Wildlife Partner Program, GFP Wetland and Grassland Programs, land acquisition process, etc.

QUESTION: Is there any effort to document woody habitat loss?

ANSWER: Imagery is available but labor intensive to get any kind of detail.

QUESTION: Is loss of woody habitat a "wash" with number of new shelterbelts being planted vs. number taken out?

ANSWER: Depends on the area and type of planting.

QUESTION: Have there been loss of natural woody cover or mostly just man-made woody cover?

ANSWER: Likely more loss of the man-made shelterbelts, general land clearing, etc.

QUESTION: Does GFP have any direct correlation with loss of habitat and the number of deer licenses issued?

ANSWER: Yes and no. Social carrying capacity can be just as important; manage for less deer if we have less habitat; have to consider both biological and social capacities.

-Suggestion to get data from conservation districts on number of shelterbelts getting planted each year.

QUESTION: Is food plot program limited by money/budget?

ANSWER: No, limited more by landowner desire to enroll.

QUESTION: There is a clause in GFP contracts indicating that participating landowners "must provide reasonable free access"... wondering if this is limiting enrollment? How does GFP define "reasonable"?

ANSWER: Landowner can let one non-family member hunt or 100... both considered "reasonable".

QUESTION: Habitat fencing \$1000/site... can this amount be raised per site?

ANSWER: GFP can look into options.

QUESTION: Are the plant species (grasses and forbs) used in the pheasant brood mix (perennial food plot) specific to landowner or site?

ANSWER: No, all same mix.

QUESTION: Can landowner have both Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) and Wetlands Reserve Enhancement Program (WREP) on same piece property?

ANSWER: No, CRP payment ends once that particular piece of land is enrolled in WREP.

QUESTION: How is value assessed for WREP?

ANSWER: Real estate estimate based on soil type.

QUESTION: What is general CRP signup availability?

ANSWER: 2014 Farm Bill did lower the national cap of CRP acres; only 101 acres accepted in SD despite 1,000s of acres offered due to cap; erodibility index was not high enough in SD when compared with other states making lands in SD less competitive nationally; SD however enrolled many acres in continuous CRP instead; will be opportunities to enroll in various programs after October 2017.

QUESTION asked by GFP to group: What is limiting landowners from developing deer habitat on their lands? is it financial incentive? Answer from some stakeholders, Yes. How much money will it take? No specific amount suggested by group. Stakeholders suggested there needs to be more education or more information on available programs.

-Comment: concern that there are too many restrictions on grazing. Answer: GFP doesn't have specific grazing management stipulation in grassland programs but can provide suggestions; basically GFP doesn't limit how landowner can graze his/her land.

-Discussion/Comment: Can GFP better define “reasonable free access”? Can GFP and landowner “write in” on agreement contract what that number of users might be? pros and cons to strict definition.

-Comment: Landowners are not being acknowledged that they are feeding, watering, and provide habitat to wildlife all year; hunters don’t offer to help out anymore; suggestion to GFP is they maybe not require reasonable access the first year if enroll in any GFP program.

-Comment: There are many landowners that don’t know about any of GFP programs so what is best way for GFP to get word out to landowners about our programs? Suggestion: Contact Ag organizations and put article in magazines e.g., Rural Electric Magazine; more communication with other entities such as Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) or Farm Service Agency (FSA); they can inform landowners what programs that GFP might have that fits their needs.

QUESTION: Has moratorium on land acquisitions been removed? Are we turning down land offers because of budget?

ANSWER: Moratorium has been removed; more about priorities for land management needed rather than finances to purchase.

QUESTION: Does GFP know the number of deer hunting days on game production areas (GPAs)?

ANSWER: No we don’t have a survey with that specific data but we do ask how much time is spent on public areas or walk-in areas (WIA).

QUESTION: Land acquisitions: does GFP require some access or way to access in order to purchase land?

ANSWER: Yes.

QUESTION: Why wouldn’t GFP purchase land just for purpose of having habitat for wildlife (i.e., no public access)?

ANSWER: GFP needs to be able to manage the land as well; also acquire with purpose for hunting access and opportunity. Spend on average \$18/acre to manage GPA’s

QUESTION: What percentage of non-resident deer hunters hunt on public lands?

ANSWER: We haven’t asked this on hunter harvest survey recently.

QUESTION: How are controlled hunting access program (CHAP) lands acquired and paid?

ANSWER: Pay by hunter use/day; landowners typically come to GFP with interest in CHAP option.

QUESTION: How are Bureau of Land Management (BLM) or School and Public Lands (SPL) signed?

ANSWER: BLM not signed, few SPL have signs; most hunters use GFP Hunting Atlas; challenge is a lot BLM is landlocked by private land and smaller parcels; huge undertaking; BLM is looking at travel management planning effort which will look at roads and which ones are open/closed;

GFP making effort to sign newly acquired Corps of Engineers (COE) lands better; hunter really needs to use GPS when hunting COE land along Missouri River.

QUESTION: Are there any efforts to expand Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program (CREP)?

ANSWER: Currently it costs \$3million/year for 80,000 acres and \$3M was our cap annual budget for CREP, so GFP currently does not have the budget to enroll the max of 100,000 acres; CREP cost more per acre than WIA because matching CRP contracts. GFP is providing 100% of the non-federal match for the James River Watershed CREP.

QUESTION: How can GFP work with landowners to allow limited access to some of the landlocked public lands?

ANSWER: There have been some efforts but GFP is open to ideas; could GFP make some of these areas a limited access unit?

**Wildlife Damage Management Program-** presentation by Keith Fisk, GFP Wildlife Damage Program Administrator

-Reviewed annual expenditures, program descriptions, urban deer management, deer vehicle collision

QUESTION: There is Wildlife Society Bulletin article about urban deer management, non-lethal control and contraceptives. Has GFP considered this?

ANSWER: this is usually in areas with extremely high deer densities; sterilization is expensive

GFP question to group: What are some things or ideas that GFP could consider to increase landowner tolerance to deer? Is there anything GFP is not doing that we could be doing?

Responses from stakeholders: Better communication or get word out to landowners about available programs; more deer habitat specific programs; cedar encroachment negatively impacts mule deer habitat; hunt/harvest more white-tailed deer than mule deer.

GFP question to group: What are some ideas for changes or improvements to Wildlife Damage Management program?

Comment: Increase quality and age structure of mule deer.

QUESTION: Can GFP issue antler point restrictions?

ANSWER: Antler point restrictions really don't help increase quality; limiting number of mule deer hunters has more impact; (publication from Mule Deer Work Group was made available).

Comment: Manage mule deer in mule deer country and manage white-tails in white-tail country.

**Law Enforcement-** presentation by Andy Alban, GFP Law Enforcement Program Administrator

-Reviewed law enforcement activities and challenges during deer seasons.

-Statewide: 78 wildlife conservation officers (53 are field officers).

-About 1,200 hunting violations in general per year; Trespass is #1 violation.

-Only one violation is actually felony level, i.e., hunting during closed season.

-Other violations: spotlighting, shooting from vehicle, hunting in wrong unit, failure to tag, baiting, use of vehicle to harass or intercept game, no orange, wanton waste.

-Citations- paid fines go to the schools.

QUESTION: Should wanton waste laws be stricter?

ANSWER: Difficult to dictate what a person has to take or consume and what they must do with the legally harvested animal.

QUESTION: What percent are deliberate violations vs. honest mistakes?

ANSWER: Survey was actually done years ago... about a ¼ of violations were classified as “careless”.

Comment: Want to see more officers in the field and more road checks.

-Several questions from the group on legally transporting deer carcass and across state lines.

-Monetary fine is not much of a violation deterrent; loss of hunting privileges is more of deterrent.

QUESTION: How can landowner get transferrable tags based on amount of land or be guaranteed a certain number of transferrable tags per year?

ANSWER: Statutory issue, so needs to go through legislature or can work with GFP on license allocations in particular unit so perhaps more non-resident hunters can get license.

Comment that transferrable licenses will create more landowner tolerance; maybe allow 2 transferrable tags in exchange for allowing one regular hunter; landowners are forced into Dakota Safari group.

Comment: There should be No boat hunting allowed on Missouri River

Comment: Create a limited access unit for Little Bend Game Production Area.

Chad Switzer, GFP Wildlife Program Administrator: Wrap- up, GFP staff working on 3<sup>rd</sup> draft of management plan; next meeting likely not until March 2017.

Meeting adjourned at 5:15 pm